

Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research

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Agenda Item 11 - Other Business

Preparations for UNCED - Progress Report

Attached for your information is a progress report on the preparations for UNCED, to be held in Rio de Janeiro, June 3-14, 1992.

Attachment

Distribution

CGIAR Members
Participants at the meeting

The Status of Preparations for the UN
Conference on Environment and Development
(UNCED), Rio de Janeiro, June 3-14, 1992.

I. Preparations for UNCED

In response to the consensus prevailing at the 1991 Mid-Term Meeting that the system should associate itself more closely with the negotiating process leading up to UNCED, the centers most concerned and the Secretariat continued to monitor and participate in the preparations for Earth Summit, especially the 4th and final session of the Preparatory Committee (PrepCom4).

1. Contacts with UNCED Secretariat

Centers and Secretariat continued their contacts with the UNCED Secretariat in Geneva and New York and provided comments on documents prepared for PrepCom4. A representative of the UNCED Secretariat participated in an UNCED-related media/NGO briefing in Washington in October 1991; shortly after PrepCom4, UNCED Secretary-General Maurice Strong addressed participants of a CGIAR-oriented Rockefeller Foundation/IFPRI media seminar in Annapolis, in April 1992, giving his views on the continuing UNCED process and the prospects of UNCED itself.

2. Dialogue with NGOs

The contacts with specialized Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) resulting from the Keystone Dialogue on Plant Genetic Resources were strengthened at an informal meeting of center, Secretariat and NGO representatives preceding ICW91 in Washington. As an outcome, it was agreed to continue discussions at the regional level; a regional meeting was held at CIAT (April 13-16) between NGOs and IARCs in Latin America and the Caribbean. The objective of the meeting was to strengthen contacts and improve the level of mutual understanding.

3. Briefings

As a separate event but in coincidence with PrepCom4, a briefing on the CGIAR for the UN community, members of PrepCom delegations, NGOs and the media was organized on April 1 at UN Headquarters in New York by the World Bank, in cooperation with UNDP and FAO. In November/December 1991, smaller media/NGO briefings on CGIAR and UNCED had been jointly organized with donors/support organizations in Bonn, Berne and Rome.

4. Materials for UNCED

On behalf of the System, IBPGR and CIP produced a series of materials for wide dissemination, including a booklet and newsfeature on sustainability of agriculture (CIP), a special edition of Geneflow, a poster, and a series of 10 fact sheets on biodiversity and plant genetic resources (IBPGR). These materials have been widely distributed, including to delegations at PrepCom4.

II. CGIAR participation in UNCED

5. Participation

The global scope and importance of the UNCED debate and the conventions and action program to be adopted by Earth Summit require an adequate level of presence of the CGIAR at the Rio conference. The CGIAR's visible presence and coverage of the debates is needed for several purposes:

- * to make use of opportunities to contact and brief an exceptional set of policy and decision makers on international agricultural research and the role of the CGIAR;
- * to contribute its scientific and organizational expertise to technical discussions;
- * to underscore the Group's ability to provide its share to the activities needed for Agenda 21 implementation;
- * to ensure that governments or agencies do not establish competitive institutions for international agro-ecological development research because they are ignorant of the CGIAR's role and potential;
- * to exploit opportunities for public awareness work offered by the presence of numerous NGO and media representatives by ensuring adequate presence at the NGO Global Forum and in the various Press Centers.

These purposes require a considerable breadth of coverage of UNCED activities and events; a suitable and cost-effective approach to doing so has been satisfactorily tested at PrepCom4 where centers and the Secretariat worked together in a complementary fashion by taking turns in representing the system at the debates. Because of the unusual dimensions and importance of PrepCom4, it was sequentially covered by officers from IBPGR, CIAT (also on behalf of CIP), and the Secretariat (also on behalf of IIMI).

6. Delegation

The CGIAR as a system has been invited by the UNCED Secretariat to participate in Earth Summit with a single delegation as an inter-governmental organization with observer status. Interested centers will participate as members of this delegation.

7. Coverage plan

The coverage plan for UNCED envisages that officers from IBPGR, CIAT and the Secretariat, plus support staff from Latin American centers, share duties in

- representing CGIAR in substantive discussions to the extent permitted by its observer status;
- contributing indirectly to discussions through contacts with delegations and the UNCED Secretariat;

- monitoring UNCED debates;
- monitoring NGO activities at the Global Forum;
- setting up and staffing a CGIAR/IBPGR exhibit at the Global Forum;
- participating in public awareness work.

The delegation has been composed in such a way (Directors-General of CIAT and IBPGR, the Executive Secretary of the CGIAR Secretariat and senior officers from IBPGR, CIAT and the CGIAR Secretariat, mostly in sequential attendance) that--in addition to minimum coverage requirements--sufficient scientific expertise and authority will be present at any time during the conference to permit quick intervention either in debates or in public awareness activities, should the need arise.

8. Exhibit

IBPGR, the lead center for public awareness work at UNCED, is setting up a small CGIAR exhibit at the NGO Global Forum with a view to disseminating documents and performing public awareness work.

III. Prospects for UNCED

Officially, the process of preparations for UNCED ended with PrepCom4 on April 4 in New York, which--after a five-week session--left much unfinished business behind.

9. PrepCom4 highlights

The dates of the conference in Rio de Janeiro were moved forward to June 3-14 in order not to coincide with a major Muslim holiday.

The former Earth Charter, now called Rio Declaration or Principles on General Rights and Obligations (attached), is the only document ready for adoption by UNCED.

Following on PrepCom4, the Biodiversity and Climate conventions have again been discussed, as well as the future role of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) in funding UNCED follow-up work.

The action program itself, called Agenda 21, is in half-finished shape with large parts remaining in square brackets, expressing lack of consensus. (A summary of proceedings is available) It cannot be adopted without agreement on the financial implications.

The Means of Implementations sections of all Agenda documents remained bracketed since programs cannot be costed without knowing the source of funds and mechanisms of their disbursement. The financial part was treated separately and some understanding has been reached that, instead of setting up a special fund or separate funding mechanisms for individual chapters, additional funding would be made available through existing channels but views on modalities and amounts still differ widely. Despite many encouraging moments during the debate on financial resources, negotiations broke down at the end of the meeting, mainly because of large differences remaining between the positions of some of the large blocks.

10. Agenda 21

Among the Agenda 21 chapters, several are of particular relevance to the CGIAR:

- National mechanisms and international cooperation for capacity building. The broad context of capacity building for sustainable agricultural development concerns all centers and especially ISNAR insofar as training activities and efforts to strengthen NARS could assume special significance as an element of national capacity building plans.

- Science for sustainable development. The CGIAR could serve as a model and instrument for organizing international research on sustainable forms of development and participate in capacity and capability building work.

- Land resources. This section included:

- Desertification and drought. The discussion on a proposal by the African group to develop a legal instrument (convention) on arid and semi-arid lands will have to continue in Rio. Aspects of interest to the CGIAR include strengthening of national capabilities in better coping with dryland agriculture problems.

- Promoting sustainable agriculture and rural development. Consultations are to continue on a more open trading system for agriculture and the integration of agriculture and environment policies. A reference to 'people under occupation' also remains in brackets. It contains a section on plant and animal genetic resources. The document refers to many research areas covered by IARCs.

- Integrated land management.

- Fragile ecosystems (esp. mountainous areas)

- Transfer of technology. Three sectors, Intellectual Property Rights and transfer of technology on concessional terms, as well as safe transfer, remain bracketed. The chapter concerns mainly IBPGR and the commodity centers; linkages exist to genetic resources, the biodiversity convention and biotechnology.

- Freshwater resources. The section on water in agriculture remained uncontroversial whereas 'inappropriate' water resource development projects such as dams, river and irrigation schemes were considered ecologically harmful. Section on agriculture use of water concerns mainly IIMI and ecoregional centers.

- Conservation of biological diversity. Existing brackets require for their removal the successful completion of the intergovernmental negotiations on the draft convention (IBPGR, crop centers).

- Environmentally sound management of biotechnology. The section on biosafety remains bracketed, as well as fertility-related mechanisms (Commodity centers, IBPGR)

- The forestry chapter of Agenda 21. The chapter offers ample opportunities for conducting research related to implementation of its provisions. The centers most concerned are CIFOR (forest management and harvesting), ICRAF (shifting cultivation, reclamation of forest fallows), IFPRI (policies that influence forest conservation and management), IBPGR (germplasm conservation, forest biodiversity research), and ISNAR (research capacity building). Under International/Regional Cooperation, the document mentions the need for promoting international forest research and strengthening related institutions within and outside the CGIAR, and the establishment of CIFOR.

- Statement of forestry principles. The document is in poor shape, with important parts bracketed and late-hour amendments that remained undiscussed.

- Combatting deforestation. The call for post-UNCED discussions on a binding legal instrument on forest management remains bracketed and prospects for resolving the impasse are not considered encouraging.

11. Follow-up

UNCED Secretary-General Maurice Strong indicated at the Rockefeller/IFPRI seminar following PrepCom4 that formal and informal negotiations would continue until the last moment in a variety of fora, including UNCED itself, aiming mainly at de-bracketing Agenda 21 and moving ahead on the conventions.

Contrary to the UNCED Secretariat's earlier predictions, the Earth Summit will now not be a largely ceremonial event but a negotiating and pledging conference. How this will be achieved in the presence of dozens of heads of state, government and agencies blocking meeting time with statements remains to be seen.

IV. Post-UNCED dialogue

12. A new era?

In the likely case that UNCED will not achieve all of the organizers' original goals there can be little doubt that inter-governmental negotiations would continue afterwards with considerable momentum. Independently of its outcome, UNCED is now by many expected to usher in a new era in global collaboration; the preparatory process itself and the unusual publicity it enjoyed are said to have considerably enhanced levels of knowledge of problems and potential solutions not only among the numerous direct and indirect participants in the UNCED process but also among a wider public.

13. Need for research

For the CGIAR, the intensity of the inter-governmental dialogue may prove more important than the direct outcome of UNCED. Tough negotiations in sectors of vital interest to the CGIAR - biodiversity, biotechnology, soils, water, forestry, sustainability, capacity building - can only sharpen the perception of governments, NGOs and the media of the need for research as the key to better understanding and tackling the multitude of agro-ecological development problems.

14. ICW92

The CGIAR Secretariat will report to ICW92 on the outcome of Earth Summit with a view to seeking the Group's views on what interaction the CGIAR might pursue with interested parties, especially with regards to UNCED follow-up work.

Draft of Environmental Rules: 'Global Partnership'

Special to The New York Times

UNITED NATIONS, April 4 — Following is the draft text of a declaration of principles for encouraging environmentally responsible development that is to be considered in June by leaders attending an environmental summit meeting in Rio de Janeiro:

THE CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT,

HAVING MET at Rio de Janeiro from June 3 to 14 1992,

REAFFIRMING the Declaration of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, adopted at Stockholm on June 16, 1972, and seeking to build upon it,

WITH THE GOAL of establishing a new and equitable global partnership through the creation of new levels of cooperation among states, key sectors of societies and people,

WORKING TOWARD international agreements which respect the interests of all and protect the integrity of the global environmental and developmental system,

RECOGNIZING the integral and interdependent nature of the earth, our home,

PROCLAIMS that:

Principle 1. Human beings are at the center of concerns for sustainable development. They are entitled to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature.

Principle 2. States have, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of international law, the sovereign right to exploit their own resources pursuant to their own environmental and developmental policies, and the responsibility to insure that activities within their jurisdiction or control do not cause damage to the environment of other states or of areas beyond the limits of national jurisdiction.

Principle 3. The right to development must be fulfilled so as to equitably meet developmental and environmental needs of present and future generations.

Principle 4. In order to achieve sustainable development, environmental protection shall constitute an integral part of the development process and cannot be considered in isolation from it.

Principle 5. All states and all people shall cooperate in the essential task of eradicating poverty as an indispensable requirement for sustainable development, in order to decrease the disparities in standards of living and better meet the needs of the majority of the people of the world.

Principle 6. The special situation and needs of developing countries, particularly the least developed and those most environmentally vulnerable, shall be given special priority. International actions in the field of environment and development should also address the interests and needs of all countries.

Principle 7. States shall cooperate in a spirit of global partnership to conserve, protect and restore the health and integrity of the earth's ecosystem. In view of the different contributions to global environmental degradation, states have common but differentiated responsibilities. The developed countries acknowledge the responsibility that they bear in the international pursuit of sustainable development in view of the pressures their societies place on the global environment and of the technologies and financial resources they command.

Principle 8. To achieve sustainable development

and a higher quality of life for all people, states should reduce and eliminate unsustainable patterns of production and consumption and promote appropriate demographic policies.

Principle 9. States should cooperate to strengthen endogenous capacity building for sustainable development by improving scientific understanding through exchanges of scientific and technological knowledge, and by enhancing the development, adaptation, diffusion and transfer of technologies, including new and innovative technologies.

Principle 10. Environmental issues are best handled with the participation of all concerned citizens, at the relevant level. At the national level, each individual shall have appropriate access to information concerning the environment that is held by public authorities, including information on hazardous materials and activities in their communities, and the opportunity to participate in decision-making processes. States shall facilitate and encourage public awareness and participation by making information widely available. Effective access to judicial and administrative proceedings, including redress and remedy, shall be provided.

Principle 11. States shall enact effective environmental legislation. Environmental standards, management objectives and priorities should reflect the environmental and developmental context to which they apply. Standards applied by some countries may be inappropriate and of unwarranted economic and social cost to other countries, in particular developing countries.

Principle 12. States should cooperate to promote a supportive and open international economic system that would lead to economic growth and sustainable development in all countries, to better address the problems of environmental degradation. Trade policy measures for environmental purposes should not constitute a means of arbitrary or unjustifiable discrimination or a disguised restriction on international trade. Unilateral actions to deal with environmental challenges outside the jurisdiction of the importing country should be avoided. Environmental measures addressing trans-boundary or global environmental problems should, as far as possible, be based on an international consensus.

Principle 13. States shall develop national law regarding liability and compensation for the victims of pollution and other environmental damage. States shall also cooperate in an expeditious and more determined manner to develop further international law regarding liability and compensation for adverse effects of environmental damage caused by activities within their jurisdiction or control to areas beyond their jurisdiction.

Principle 14. States should effectively cooperate to discourage or prevent the relocation and transfer to other states of any activities and substances that cause severe environmental degradation or are found to be harmful to human health.

Principle 15. In order to protect the environment, the precautionary approach shall be widely applied to states according to their capabilities. Where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty shall not be used as a reason for postponing cost-effective measures to prevent environmental degradation.

Principle 16. National authorities should endeavor to promote the internalization of environmental costs and the use of economic instruments, taking into account the approach that the polluter should, in principle, bear the cost of pollution, with due regard to the public interest and without distorting international trade and investment.

Principle 17. Environmental impact assessment, as a national instrument, shall be undertaken for proposed activities that are likely to have a significant adverse impact on the environment and are subject to a decision of a competent national

authority.

Principle 18. States shall immediately notify other states of any natural disasters or other emergencies that are likely to produce sudden harmful effects on the environment of those states. Every effort shall be made by the international community to help states so afflicted.

Principle 19. States shall provide prior and timely notification and relevant information to potentially affected states on activities that may have a significant adverse trans-boundary environmental effect and shall consult with those states at an early stage and in good faith.

Principle 20. Women have a vital role in environmental management and development. Their full

ON SPREADING THREATS

"States should effectively cooperate to discourage or prevent the relocation and transfer to other states of any activities and substances that cause severe environmental degradation or are found to be harmful to human health."

participation is therefore essential to achieve sustainable development.

Principle 21. The creativity, ideals and courage of the youth of the world should be mobilized to forge a global partnership in order to achieve sustainable development and insure a better future for all.

Principle 22. Indigenous people and their communities, and other local communities, have a vital role in environmental management and development because of their knowledge and traditional practices. States should recognize and duly support their identity, culture and interests and enable their effective participation in the achievement of sustainable development.

Principle 23. The environment and natural resources of people under oppression, domination and occupation shall be protected.

Principle 24. Warfare is inherently destructive of sustainable development. States shall therefore respect international law providing protection for the environment in times of armed conflict and cooperate in its further development, as necessary.

Principle 25. Peace, development and environmental protection are interdependent and indivisible.

Principle 26. States shall resolve all their environmental disputes peacefully and by appropriate means in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

Principle 27. States and people shall cooperate in good faith and in a spirit of partnership in the fulfillment of the principles embodied in this Declaration and in the further development of international law in the field of sustainable development.